

# **St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School**

## **The Annual Meeting of the School Community and Election of Advisory Council Members Wednesday 24 November 2021**

### **School Advisory Council Chairperson's Report**

It is with great pleasure I once again have the opportunity to prepare for you the annual report for 2021, on behalf of the whole school community of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School. This is our first year as an Advisory Council, having ceased to operate as a School Board in 2020.

Janelle Prunster (Vice Chairperson), Jo Richardson (Treasurer), Laura Hampson (Secretary), Gerry McLaughlin, Stephenie Kunder (P & F Representative), new member Jacinta Lynton and Father Dariusz Basiaga joined the school's Leadership Group to get 2021 underway. We formally welcomed new Assistant Principal Geoff Clarke to our community in February whilst we said farewell to Father Dariusz in February. Father Dariusz (Darek) Krzysztalowicz assumed the role as Parish Priest at St Andrew's Church and joined our School Advisory Council in March. Jo Richardson successfully acquired a teaching position on staff mid-way through the year and to avoid any conflict of interest, she resigned from the Advisory Council, and we thank Jo for the four years of service and expertise she provided in her capacity as Treasurer and wish her much success in her teaching career. Janelle Prunster kindly agreed to undertake the duties as Treasurer and the transition has been seamless.

Once parents and students returned to the school grounds in February, they witnessed the extensive refurbishments that had taken place over the Christmas break, to the betterment of the Library and Kindy classrooms in particular, alongside the installation of new gates in the ECE area. We recognise the tireless efforts of Mark Hughes who coordinated all holiday projects.

Unlike last year when Easter was effectively cancelled due to COVID restrictions, Term 1 concluded with a wonderful presentation of Stations of the Cross and we thank Mrs Mieschbuehler for choreographing the children involved.

Term 2 began with several initiatives which recognised and celebrated the vast array of talents and expertise of all staff currently employed at the school. The central idea focussed on developing the charism of St Francis of Assisi, whilst Wellbeing, Aboriginal Education and Catholic Identity provided the impetus for specific learning opportunities.

An audit of our internal controls and processes was conducted in May, in line with CEWA Ltd.'s accountability measures, the results of which confirmed sound and safe financial practices. Many thanks go to Geneve Bastian in her capacity as Finance Officer.

We collaborated with both St Andrew's Catholic Primary School and Irene McCormack College in a marketing strategy to target and encourage future enrolments at all three schools. It is hoped that a system-centralised approach will maintain and improve upon our current student numbers. We anticipate that such an undertaking will also empower the relationship between the schools. Promotional materials generated so far reflect St Francis in a very positive way.

I had the pleasure of representing our school at the bi-annual Catholic Conference for Chairpersons of School Advisory Councils in June. The event is organised by CEWA and it focusses around current and future expectations for all School Councils and it confirmed that we are tracking exceptionally well under a strong and proactive leadership group.

As always, our children were thoroughly prepared for all Sacraments throughout the year - Reconciliation, First Eucharist in June and Confirmation in September. This year, the Parish and Schools have adopted a more personal approach, allocating a specific Mass to each individual school. This seems to have worked very well, affording a more intimate celebration for our families. In order to strengthen community links between Parish and School further, each school will undertake the responsibility to organise a Sunday Mass from next year. Although we will have a presence at all festivals and celebrations in 2022, St Francis will prepare the Mayflower Mass in May to acknowledge the significant role that our Mother Mary has played throughout the life of the Church. It is also pleasing to note that out of the ten new Altar Servers trained at St Andrew's Parish this year, seven of them are St Francis students, further enhancing the Catholic Identity pillar in a genuine and meaningful way.

On behalf of the school community, I would also like to thank the P & F for their continued fund-raising initiatives which have helped to add much interest to our play areas - the buried boat and land rover look fantastic!

ICT Dynamics will provide our IT support leading into the foreseeable future. It is envisaged that using an off-site organisation supported by a teacher at the school will offer a more efficient process, utilising the most up to date technological services available.

Last Friday we were finally able to formally acknowledge and celebrate 'The Blessing and Official Opening of our Completed Building Projects for Stage 7'. Originally scheduled in March 2020, to coincide with the new naming of the school, the COVID pandemic caused its postponement until invited dignitaries and guests were free and able to attend. It was a wonderful day for the whole school community and a testament to the growth and progress we continue to enjoy.

As 2021 concludes, we remain in a strong financial position, which is indicative of the pragmatism and foresight of the current Leadership Group. The Advisory Council recently received our new 'Terms of Reference' which become effective from 1 January 2022. A requirement of such is that all Council members undergo Mandatory Reporting procedures on an annual basis. CEWA Ltd is now taking a system approach to schools, one which involves the consolidation of all directives and policies in order that all 163 WA Catholic schools are covered under the same umbrella, thereby ensuring consistency across the State.

A major project for 2022 will be the design and installation of a shade structure encompassing additional sails which will provide much needed shade and a more comfortable environment throughout the few remaining exposed areas around the school. This will complement the existing shade which currently protects our children throughout the summer months.

The realistic possibility of having on-site Occupational Speech Therapy support and a Music Program will also be investigated, as we continue to improve opportunities for all current and future students.

It is an honour and a privilege to be afforded the role as Chairperson of the Advisory Council and I remain excited about the future of our school and look forward to working with equally passionate and dedicated colleagues as we support and develop existing and future strategies, to the betterment of the school. I would like to affirm that the daily operation of St Francis is very much a team effort; its growing reputation is built upon the dedication of ALL staff: grounds and maintenance staff, reception staff, finance staff, teacher assistants, teaching and non- teaching staff, whether employed on a full-time or part-time basis. I also recognise the support of those parents that directly impact upon the activities provided as part of our extra-curricular program. On behalf of the School Advisory Council, I thank you ALL.

As mentioned earlier in my report, Jo Richardson stepped down from the Council and into one of our classrooms. We are also sad to see Gerry McLaughlin leave the Advisory Council after many years of dedicated service. Gerry has brought great insight and expertise into our discussions and deliberations, and we thank him for the huge contribution he has made throughout his time as both a Board and Council member. At the conclusion of this meeting, we will have an opportunity to hear from three parents who would like to be considered for roles on the Advisory Council in 2022.

As for now, I would like to wish you and your families a very happy, safe and blessed Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I thank you for your attendance this evening and for your continued support of our wonderful school community.

.....

Tony Summers

School Advisory Council Chairperson

.....

Date